

SIDE SEWERS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a side sewer?

A side sewer is a privately owned and maintained pipe system which is designed to carry sewage from a plumbing outlet or other approved facility from a building or structure to the public sewer system located in the Public Place (street or alley) or other approved discharge point (septic system).

2. What is a public sewer system?

A public sewer system is a publicly owned and maintained sewage system which carries sewage and flows to a public owned treatment works.

3. Where is the division of the “public” side and the “private” side of the sewer system?

The private ownership of the side sewer starts at the connection to the public sewer system and extends to the plumbing outlet at a building or structure. The private side of the side sewer is the property owner’s responsibility and is not serviced or repaired by the City of Seattle.

4. Do I need a City permit to repair my side sewer?

Yes. The property owner is required to obtain a City of Seattle permit to repair or fix the side sewer. A City site inspector will inspect the repaired line to validate that the work was performed according to code. If you need guidance as to policies or procedures, please contact the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) Side Sewer Program which can be found at www.seattle.gov/dpd/SideSewer

5. How do I get a permit?

A side sewer permit can be obtained from DPD’s Applicant Service Center (ASC), located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Ave., (206) 684-8850. DPD Client Assistance Memo (CAM) #503, Side Sewer Permits in Seattle, contains details on basic permit application processes for obtaining a side sewer permit. The CAM can be found at www.seattle.gov/dpd/cams

6. How can I get my side sewer line repaired so I will not have anymore sewer backups?

You should request from a licensed plumber or side sewer contractor a TV/video inspection of the side sewer between the building or structure and the public sewer system. From the results of the TV/video the licensed plumber or side sewer contractor should provide you with information on the status of the existing side sewer and recommendations as to what repairs would be required to resolve future side sewer backups.

7. What do I do when I smell sewer odors/gases out in the street or overflowing from a sewer manhole located in the street?

Immediately contact the Seattle Public Utility Drainage Complaint line at (206) 386-1800.